Let’s Get to Work!

Have you ever met a dentist who was a fish? What about a beaver who fights fires? A woodpecker construction worker? A farmer bee? Humans aren’t the only ones who do these and many other important jobs.

Cleaner wrasse fish are only about 4 inches long with blue, black, and sometimes yellow stripes. They live in coral reefs and have an interesting career. They clean larger fish’s teeth and mouths. They do this by swimming inside and using their own mouths to gently nibble away anything that shouldn’t be there. This provides cleaner wrasses with food and helps the larger fish stay healthy. And in the same way that dentists and hygienists work together in an office, cleaner wrasses set up a group cleaning station. They let “clients” know when it’s open by wiggling up and down, kind of like the people who dance near a road with a business’s sign to attract passersby. Larger fish and even turtles line up to have their teeth cleaned. Sometimes the big fish will even spread their fins and gills and ask the cleaner wrasses to give those a touch-up, too.

Can you picture a beaver driving a firetruck or aiming a hose? They may not be able to do those things, but beavers are excellent firefighters.

They build dams in streams and rivers to create small ponds where their families live in “beaver lodges.” The dams help hold some water in the area as it flows downstream. That creates wetlands that can stop fires from spreading. Wetlands also give animals a safe place to go during a fire. The extra water allows more plants to grow, which provides food for many species. The sticks and mud that the dams are made of help clean pollutants out of the water. Beavers work hard to build their dams. If you’ve ever been called a “busy beaver,” now you know what a compliment it is!

Woodpeckers, gophers, and moles don’t wear construction hats, but they build a lot of houses. As woodpeckers peck at trees to find insects to eat, they create small hollows that make perfect nests for birds, squirrels, and other animals. Gophers and moles dig lots of underground tunnels that many animals use for shelter, including foxes, snakes, owls, mice, and rats. When you’re standing on the grass, you might be over top of an animal apartment complex.
Directions: Circle the text structure that best fits the passage you read. Draw a graphic organizer for that text structure and label it with evidence from the text to support your answer.
Cleaner wrasse fish clean larger fish’s teeth and mouths by swimming inside and using their own mouths to gently nibble away anything that shouldn’t be there.

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Woodpeckers peck at trees to find insects to eat, which creates small hollows that make perfect nests for birds, squirrels, and other animals.

Beavers build dams in streams and rivers to create small ponds where their families live in “beaver lodges.” The dams help to hold some water in the area as it flows downstream, which creates wetlands that can stop fires from spreading.

Answer Sheet
Text Structure: Description

Directions: Circle the text structure that best fits the passage you read. Draw a graphic organizer for that text structure and label it with evidence from the text to support your answer.

Animal work